

What Kind of Peace is Being Built?

Reflections on the State of Peacebuilding
Ten Years After *The Agenda for Peace*

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Preface

The field of peacebuilding is at a crossroads. A decade after the concept was revived in the early 1990s, translated into a series of experiments to rebuild war-torn societies and subsequently expanded to the prevention of deadly conflicts, the idea of peacebuilding is being challenged from two directions. It is being questioned from within, due to its uneven benefits even in cases of relative success such as Cambodia, El Salvador and South Africa. It also risks being sidelined or distorted by the new international war on terrorism and its corollary of pre-emptive defence.

This is of concern to the International Development Research Centre because, as part of its mandate to foster development research, IDRC has been supporting research on and for peacebuilding since the mid-1990s. Much of this work has been conducted by researchers in post-war contexts, focussing on the specific challenges in their societies. Some of it has been comparative in nature, dealing within sectoral challenges such as democratic development that are common to postwar situations. Yet in the course of carrying out or supporting this research, IDRC and its partners frequently asked an essential question about the enterprise as a whole: What kind of peace is being built? September 11, 2001 and its aftermath prompted some of us to ask further basic questions: Who is benefiting from contemporary peacebuilding efforts, who is not, and why? How can one meaningfully assess peacebuilding efforts overall, given their complexity? What kind of peace is possible at the dawn of the 21st Century, given current the macro-trends summarised under the rubric of globalization? What light has research already shed, and what new insights could it offer, on these and related questions?

In early 2001 IDRC initiated a transnational discussion to explore these issues more systematically. Dr. Alejandro Bendaña and Dr. Michael Lund, two IDRC partners with impressive trajectories as analysts and practitioners, were asked to prepare distinct background papers. Drafts were submitted to a moderated electronic discussion and revisited in greater depth at a workshop on September 30-October 1, 2002. The virtual discussion and workshop brought together about forty IDRC staff, distinguished partners and interlocutors from the research, diplomacy, policy-making and programming communities, in the North and in the South.

The revised background papers are included in this publication, the seventh in a series of periodic working papers released by the Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program Initiative of IDRC. The details of the workshop are covered in the enclosed report. I will summarise a few elements of this discussion for those readers who are pressed for time but I hope that even they will find a moment to read the papers and workshop report in full. Six themes stand out from the enormously rich discussion over the course of 2001.

1. Though it has grown over the past decade, the peacebuilding enterprise faces profound challenges related both to its effectiveness and its legitimacy. Yet it remains an essential effort that seems more desirable than its main alternatives. Research should contribute to this enterprise through more rigorous documentation of best practices, conceptual clarification as well as through critical studies of enduring gaps between peacebuilding theory and practice on the ground.

2. Peacebuilding has become more difficult but also more vital in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. The terrorist attacks against the United States in 2001 and subsequent responses have magnified obstacles to the peaceful resolution of disputes in contexts such as the Middle East, yet they may have also created new opportunities for peacebuilding in societies elsewhere. 9/11 and its aftermath are poignant reminders that national and international power relations shape peace-making and peace implementation processes. Researchers must study the evolving “realpolitik” of peacebuilding more carefully, in particular settings and at the global level, in order to contribute to more effective practices on the ground.

3. Globalization is a multi-dimensional phenomenon whose impacts on peacebuilding are complex and ambiguous. It is difficult to generalise about the peace and conflict impacts of a phenomenon that includes the liberalisation of international finance, trade and investment, the increasing flow of people and cultural artifacts across borders, changing patterns of multilateral cooperation and transnational crime. For example, economic growth and democratisation can assist peacebuilding yet the uneven distribution of economic benefits and the easy flow of small arms or illicitly acquired funds across borders can undermine efforts to build peace. As such there is an urgent need for more systematic, inter-disciplinary research on the distinct dimensions of globalization and their diverse impacts on conflict and peacebuilding processes.

4. The causes of conflict may change but linking short-term peacebuilding to longer term measures that address the causes of conflict remains a major challenge. Frequently, the factors that generate armed conflict in a given setting change and may be eclipsed by other motives over time. For peacebuilding to be sustainable it must effectively deal with the major factors that drive conflict in particular settings. For example, where economic and social inequities are drivers of conflict, economic and social reforms should redress inequities in a timely manner. Yet the linkage between short-term measures and the longer term socio-economic development agenda is one of the weakest aspects of contemporary peacebuilding. Researchers should study this persistent gap to help identify strategies that might link short term peacebuilding and socio-economic development processes more effectively.

5. The proliferation of peacebuilding actors calls for a research program that tracks their evolving comparative advantages and thereby contributes to enhanced partnerships. The deep involvement of UN agencies, regional

organisations, bilateral donors and international NGOs in peacebuilding justifies ongoing research to assess and help enhance the performance of these organisations. Yet there is also a need for systematic research on national actors, not only on “spoilers” but also on the roles and options available to domestic peace constituencies – national government agencies, political parties, media, women’s, business and other civil society organisations – in postwar settings. Further research examining the emerging coalitions between national and international actors (which undermine or facilitate peacebuilding) is also required.

6. Overarching research on “meta” issues such as globalization or the kind of peace that is being built should be linked to the ongoing analysis of particular peacebuilding efforts and the accumulation of knowledge on sectoral challenges.

All three streams of research should take advantage of innovative methodologies such as research-practitioner and South-South exchanges, as well as of anthropological approaches to the study of conflict and peacebuilding.

The Peacebuilding Program of IDRC is in discussions with potential partners regarding possible new research initiatives to follow up on elements of this broad agenda. Throughout its programming, IDRC will continue to contribute to sustaining the transnational community of researchers and practitioners that has emerged in this domain over the past decade. Yet as noted from the outset of this exploratory exercise, the vast agenda sketched herein requires collaboration with many other research centres, funders and operational agencies. We trust that this document will provide data, ideas and inspiration for such collaborative efforts.

Many people contributed directly to this exercise. We would like to thank Alejandro Bendaña and Michael Lund for their excellent background papers, which effectively updated us all on the state of the field and provoked lively debate among participants. We thank all the partners and interlocutors who participated in the virtual discussion and in the workshop: we hope that you learned as much as we did from your active engagement in this process. Many thanks to all the IDRC staff who helped with this exercise: Library staff who chased numerous sources for the background papers, Bellanet colleagues who set up the listserve and interactive website, staff in the Grant Administration Division and President’s Office who so ably managed the many logistical details associated with such enterprises. Finally, warm thanks to colleagues from the Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program Initiative without whose creative (yet also critical, in true IDRC style) engagement this exercise would not have been fruitful.

Stephen Baranyi
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Report on the “What Kind of Peace is Being Built?” Workshop
Ottawa, Canada, September 30 and October 1, 2002

Background

Certain historic events lead us to question and re-evaluate our current situation, and open a space for new opportunities and hopes. For many, the end of the Cold War represented a unique chance to build greater international cooperation and to achieve international peace and security. It is in this context that UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali introduced the 1992 *Agenda for Peace*. Along with it, the field of peacebuilding was revived and evolved into what some now call the “peacebuilding enterprise”.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) joined this enterprise in 1996 when it established the Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program Initiative (PBR) to foster research “on and for” peacebuilding. Six years later, as new staff joined PBR and worked to develop its future research agenda and programming, a critical stocktaking exercise of the field seemed in order. Among many urgent issues, some questioned whether the international community was achieving the results envisaged after the end of the Cold War. There was also a desire to better understand what light research was shedding on this question, and how new research might contribute to the search for more effective approaches to peacebuilding. The tenth year anniversary of the *Agenda for Peace* provided an opportunity to engage other peacebuilding partners and colleagues in this stocktaking exercise. Nine months of reflection and discussion culminated in a workshop entitled “What Kind of Peace is Being Built?” which took place on September 30 and October 1, 2002. This report summarizes the principal elements emphasized during this workshop and throughout the reflection exercise. As such it also points toward a future research agenda for IDRC and interested partners.

As noted by PBR Team Leader Pamela Scholey in her opening remarks: “... it (was) our partners in South Africa, Central America, and Palestine who first confronted us with concerns about the kind of peace being constructed in their societies, who was benefiting from those processes and who was being left out, and who was driving the global agenda.” Such concerns led to other uncomfortable questions regarding the nature of peacebuilding and the need to better assess and understand its successes and failures. What have we learned from the past 10 years of peacebuilding activity? Have we been able to incorporate these lessons in our work to generate better results? What kind of peace is possible today, in a world that is becoming more globalized and where power is increasingly concentrated in the West? These questions appear ever more urgent now that we are confronted with the aftermath of September 11 and the subsequent responses to that tragedy. As some governments favour more coercive and pre-emptive measures in the name of national security, what kind of peace will be built for the people of Afghanistan, Palestine/Israel, Colombia, and for all peoples?

These are some of the questions addressed in the stimulating background papers by Dr. Michael Lund and Dr. Alejandro Bendaña. These papers oriented the virtual discussion from May to August, and the workshop on September 30 and October 1, 2002. The workshop began with an overview of the papers followed by comments and discussion. The remaining two thirds were enriched by the exchange of ideas generated from working groups addressing the specifics of peacebuilding in four regions: Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. On the second day, the group reconvened to address potential cross-regional and policy research issues through two thematic working groups: "Comparative research on overarching insights from contemporary post-war experiences" and "Globalization, conflict and peacebuilding". Forty participants from the research and policy-making communities, North and South, took part in this exercise. What follows is an overview of some of the principal arguments highlighted beginning with summaries of the lead discussion papers.

Dr. Michael Lund

Dr. Michael Lund's discussion paper presents a thorough analysis of the post-war peacebuilding enterprise, highlights some of peacebuilding's weaknesses, successes and failures, and is in great part concerned about identifying means (through research or practice) that could improve the effectiveness of the field. Some of the basic questions that inspired his paper and presentation included: "What have been the results of international peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict countries, and why?; What basic principles, factors and actors determine the status of peacebuilding?; What are the most effective post-conflict peacebuilding and development strategies?; How do we know any of this?; What ought we to try in research and action?" Among the various points and arguments presented, here are some of the key issues emphasized in the paper and some of the elements that stimulated most discussion.

Firstly, Dr. Lund noted that the peacebuilding field was dramatically transformed over the past decade. It expanded its scope of activities and became more complex: "A unified concept of deliberate international peacebuilding thus has emerged that is not only multi-lateral but also multi-sectoral, in terms of what the international community should be doing on the ground, multi-levelled in terms of how much should be done, and multi-staged, in terms of when the international community should be involved" (Lund, p. 13). In addition, the number of actors involved in the field has significantly increased and one can observe a trend towards greater engagement. According to Lund, this poses serious challenges for peacebuilders and tests their ability to efficiently coordinate their efforts, manage limited resources (both human and financial), set priorities and avoid over-extending their activities.

Another important difficulty is the lack of clear definitions to indicate what peacebuilding is or is not, what peace entails. These terms can mean different things for different people – for local stakeholders, national governments, international donor agencies. As a consequence, the author noted that the field suffers from an overload of topics on the agenda and perspectives from which to view them. We need to identify what definitions of peacebuilding and peace could help us better understand our respective

objectives and better coordinate our efforts. The peacebuilding field as a whole does not need “more controversy but some consolidation.” (Lund, p. 3).

As the field of peacebuilding expanded, so did the expectations for positive outcomes and greater accountability. Linked to this reflection, Lund emphasized two fundamental concerns expressed in the field that are distinguishable but also overlap: the issues of efficacy and legitimacy. With regards to efficacy, Lund argued that the United Nations, practitioners and the peacebuilding field in general need to demonstrate that they are able to produce concrete, positive outcomes if they wish to preserve their credibility and legitimacy. The author demonstrated through a review of the literature that outcomes have been quite mixed. Consequently, he recognized that the validity of the peacebuilding enterprise is being questioned.

With regard to legitimacy, important questions were also voiced on the basic ethical validity of the peacebuilding enterprise. Lund observed that the nation-building model proposed is largely based on a consensus around neoliberal and western values such as: market-oriented economic reforms, democratisation, civil society building, human rights (mainly civil and political rather than economic, social, and cultural), rule of law, and good governance. He questioned whether this model was actually empowering people so that they could take control of their destinies and foster social justice or whether it was creating weak states and aid-dependent societies. In the end, whose interests are we serving: local people’s interests or the interests of Western powers?

According to Lund, these concerns on efficacy and legitimacy should motivate researchers to investigate how the peacebuilding field could become more effective and legitimate. The second part of the discussion paper therefore reviewed important empirical research literature that evaluates whether peacebuilding is in fact effective and under what conditions. The author pointed out that the peacebuilding field can sometimes be its own worst enemy and suffers from various problems: terms are poorly defined; emotive appeals are often used as arguments; pieties are uttered without solid evidence; solutions chase problems rather than the other way around, etc. He argued that we must look more critically at the actual record of peacebuilding to assess how well it has performed in comparison to what is assumed to be happening.

In order to conduct this critical assessment, Lund noted that researchers should first determine which research method to use. Then, they should identify the criteria for assessing the attainment of “sustainable peace”. One could opt for a range of criteria: from minimal criteria such as ending the armed conflict and violence, to maximum criteria, deeper and more long-term conditions such as achieving sustainable peace, reducing or eliminating the major causes of the conflict. Depending of the evaluation criteria used, relatively different assessments of success and failure could be achieved. In general, the author pointed out that the achievement of longer-term objectives such as economic growth, reducing inequality, and greater social justice have been more problematic.

While conducting critical assessments, Lund suggested to pay careful attention to the aspects of conflict and to the ways of peacebuilding. Such assessments could

eventually help policy-makers recommend which means or methods to use and when to increase the likelihood of producing positive outcomes. Certain conditions for success have already been observed and include: the will of the parties involved to negotiate, the nature and degrees of interventions, the level of external commitment, the use of incentives like aid programs, among others. Lund therefore concluded that research has the potential of showing “the ways and contexts in which peacebuilding can have definite value when done in a strategic way and by consulting guidelines that policy research on similar cases provides” (Lund, p. 40). While research can support the peacebuilding field, he also recognized that its impact can be limited. Lund remarked that there may be a macro-micro gap between practice and what the research suggests should be applied. Research therefore needs to suggest ways how to bridge this gap and provide incentives for practitioners to take into account the recommendations of researchers. Research also needs to be responsive to the needs of actual practitioners but at the same time, remain somewhat removed from the immediate constraints of political and bureaucratic pressures (Lund, p. 46).

In the third part of the discussion paper, the author suggested that a comparison with other alternatives is needed to determine whether peacebuilding is better or worse than other ways of dealing with conflicts. As such, Lund analysed the following alternatives: 1) benign neglect, 2) mid-conflict intervention, 3) prevention of future conflicts, and 4) fundamental reordering of global priorities (Lund, p. 42). Among them, he noted that conflict prevention has gained most attention and is said to be more humane and cost-effective (Lund, p. 43). Overall, the author concluded that peacebuilding remains a worthwhile and valid option.

Lund concluded by signalling different avenues for further research. Firstly, he suggested that more comparative studies could fill important gaps in the existing post-conflict peacebuilding empirical research. It could look at some of the same cases and other cases but with an eye to broader criteria for sustainable peace than has been examined so far. Then, further research could help identify what domestic and external factors are associated with the greatest levels of success (based on the progress made on desired goals). Finally, the study of key “best” and “worst” cases could produce policy-relevant propositions about what further elements of sustainable peace are obtained under what contextual conditions. Overall, Michael Lund hoped that research could generate “focussed analysis that leads to intelligent action” (Lund, p. 46).

Dr. Alejandro Bendaña

Dr. Alejandro Bendaña presented a critical outlook on peacebuilding, questioning its very desirability and legitimacy. Throughout his discussion paper, he highlighted some of the important limitations of the peacebuilding enterprise, and proposed priorities for future policy research that could address these limitations.

Firstly, Bendaña pointed out that there exist various interpretations of what “peace” and “peacebuilding” actually mean. He referred to the interesting argument presented by Henning Haugerudbraaten who noted that there actually exist two basic concepts of

peacebuilding: the first concept is characterized by the “short-term involvement of the international community, centralism and political measures primarily undertaken by external agent”, and the second concept entails “long-term efforts by mainly indigenous actors to promote political and economic development, and a sustainable solution to the root causes of the conflict” (Bendaña, pp. 4-5). The author then observed that multilateral organizations and governments from the North and South tend to apply the first concept. In contrast, people on the ground more often refer to the second concept. According to Bendaña, an “ideal” peace should also entail the resolution of fundamental problems such as poverty, inequality, injustice, and violence (in its various forms, including criminal violence). Therefore, he defined peace as being “the presence of justice and peacebuilding, (that) entails addressing *all* factors and forces that stand as impediments to the realization of *all* human rights for *all* human beings” (Bendaña, p. 8).

Secondly, the author then noted that at the heart of the debate between these two concepts of peacebuilding, there is the question of power as it informs both theory and practice. Bendaña argued that a deeper analytical view of power relations is indispensable, one encompassing both domestic and international actors and institutions. Among other implications, power influences how people interpret which are the main causes of conflict and the subsequent solutions that are proposed to address them.

In terms of the solutions advocated, the author noted that there has been a problematic trend towards increased interventions and increased imposition of “Western packages” on weaker developing states. The problem with such interventionist responses and development models is that they can be at odds with parallel processes for outright social transformation and sovereign self-determination (Bendaña, p. 15). Bendaña argued that increased interventions and imposed neoliberal structural adjustment programs can weaken the state and its ability to respond to its citizens’ needs. Military interventions also risk leading to abuses. Globalization (focussing mainly on its economic aspect) also greatly affects developing states: economic stabilization, adjustment and liberalization policies can weaken the state and have often been favoured over social policies that could directly benefit the poor. As a result, Bendaña observed that peacebuilding often fails to deliver the goods demanded by the population, much of which associates peace not with liberalism but with material improvement. The author pointed out that focussing on the internal dimension of the causes of conflicts over external power structures leaves the existing system and world order unquestioned. Such an approach can be to the advantage of the North at the expense of the South as Bendaña remarked: “The state in the most highly industrialized countries has never been more powerful than it is today, working unilaterally and collectively, to reshape the world and particularly the global economy according to its own metropolitan interests” (Bendaña, p. 16).

Thirdly, in front of these significant challenges, the author questioned which responses should be warranted. Should civil society take the lead in the face of authoritarian local governments and elites? On the one hand, just like intervention and conflict prevention, Bendaña argued that this kind of approach, on its own, risks to weaken the state further

when what is actually needed is a strong state that can guarantee its citizens' security. On the other hand, people on the ground and social movements have an important role to play by working for peacebuilding from the bottom-up. To demonstrate this point, the author emphasized the experience of women and social movements. Firstly, a look at gender studies demonstrates how some women have been able to mobilize and creatively find ways to make their voices heard and generate change. The author argued that: "The study of women's experiences in and around conflicts/war is crucial if we are to conceive new ways of negotiating conflict and building peace" (Bendaña, p. 29). Secondly, Bendaña mentioned that social movements can also play an important role of denunciation and recommendation of new local alternatives. According to the author, reworking unequal gender relations and achieving some collective power by coordinating efforts through social movements represent ways of challenging global power relations.

Fourthly, Bendaña analysed the implications of September 11 on the field of peacebuilding. He argued that the question 'What kind of peace is being built?' has two different answers: before and after 9/11 (Bendaña, p. 34). Among other trends, he observed that war making and national security is being reasserted while the notion of human security, and with it peacebuilding, seem to be beating a hasty retreat. More worrisome has been the behaviour of the United States that has put forward the notions of pre-emptive defence and of 'just war' where the US is "the supreme privileged body to judge who are the evil to be destroyed" (Bendaña, p. 35). In this context, researchers have an important critical role to play.

In conclusion, Bendaña suggested that future research should therefore be critical, question our assumptions on peacebuilding, and address the implications of the new world order. The external context under which peacebuilding activities are undertaken must be taken into consideration. Then, research should foster greater dialogue between the North and South and allow southern voices to be heard. As he observed: "The terms of a new partnership must be equitably arrived at. On a research basis it can begin by ensuring capacities and information from the South to come to the table on equal terms. Important efforts have to elicit non-northern research perspectives..." (Bendaña, p. 39). Finally, the author pointed out that research should not be reduced to operational projects and consultancies. There is also a notable need for increased research on the structural dimensions of peacebuilding, especially the economic and social policies that should adequately address the root causes of violent conflict (Bendaña, p. 39).

What Kind of Peace is Being Built? The Workshop

The rich discussion before and during the workshop can be organised around six themes: the state of the field; the impact of 9/11; globalization; root causes and long term challenges; actors; and further research.

The State of the Field

It was observed that the peacebuilding field has greatly expanded since the *Agenda for Peace*. There is an increased professionalisation of the field and many now refer to it as the “peacebuilding enterprise”. At the same time, most workshop participants acknowledged that good intentions do not always translate into positive outcomes. In certain circumstances, large amounts of money invested produce limited results. Such observations demand a more critical assessment of peacebuilding activities. What kind of peace are we building? To what extent has peacebuilding been successful? Is the balance of the last decade essentially one of failure? While perceptions varied, it was clear that the results obtained so far were not satisfactory for many, they didn’t fully respond to expectations. Participants argued that the peacebuilding field is being challenged by two sets of fundamental concerns: the issues of efficacy and legitimacy. Others added that they are both equally important.

Regarding the issue of efficacy, most participants agreed that additional research is needed to explain the relative successes and failures of peacebuilding, without forgetting its possible unintended consequences. Some highlighted various unanswered questions: “How much do we know for a fact (based on empirical research) and how much do we assume that we know? Is rhetoric matched with practice?” It is important not to confuse intentions with actual results. Overall, we need to determine if peacebuilding works, when it works best, and how it works best so we could make good use of lessons learned and achieve better results. By the same token, many participants believed that we need to identify and better understand the problems that challenge the peacebuilding field so that peacebuilders could address them more effectively. Is the problem one of implementation or is it the peacebuilding approach that is faulty?

Regarding the issue of legitimacy, various participants cautioned researchers not to shy away from the important task of critically questioning the very legitimacy and ethical validity of the peacebuilding enterprise. Participants observed that critical research is needed to test assumptions on what is considered to be the “right” solutions to conflict, to identify who promotes these kind of solutions and for what reasons, and who benefits from them most. Overall, the issues of efficacy and legitimacy challenge the very foundation of the peacebuilding enterprise.

Secondly, many participants were concerned about the lack of clear definitions. There exist various interpretations of the terms “peace” and “peacebuilding” corresponding to various sets of values and objectives ranging from “ending violence and conflict” to broader goals such as “achieving sustainable peace through economic growth, nation-building, and the creation of a more just and equitable society”. Whose definitions are being favoured, the presence of ambiguities, and the definitions themselves have important implications, which need to be better understood. Moreover, as indicated by one participant, after one decade of peacebuilding activity, it is time to agree on explicit and clear definitions to explain what we are doing. Future research could shed light on this debate and contribute to bringing more credibility to the field.

In the end, many participants concluded that the peacebuilding enterprise was facing deep challenges but that it remained a worthwhile effort. In spite of the difficulties encountered, the significant resources invested in peacebuilding have yielded concrete achievements. Participants cited some success stories, including the example of the Mozambican peace process. The past 10 years of peacebuilding activity have also yielded important lessons that are now influencing policy-making, and that have led to institutional reforms and to better training and coordination of the various peacebuilding actors. Many participants added that the peacebuilding enterprise has an important role to play but its actions should be better informed by deeper lessons-learned exercises. Moreover, several participants argued that there was a need to nurture a space for independent, critical analysis linked to peacebuilding practice, and for engaging key stakeholders in postwar societies in this process of critical-constructive reflection.

Peacebuilding at the International Level/ Peacebuilding After 9/11

Peacebuilding doesn't take place in a vacuum. As some participants emphasized, it is important to pay particular attention to the international context in which peacebuilding activities occur and how it impacts on them. Linked to the external context is the question of power and power relations. Participants pointed out that power relations are determinant in the negotiation of priorities. They determine, among other things, whose solutions and interests will be favoured. On various occasions, it was recommended to take a closer look at "realpolitik". More research is therefore advised to learn how to deal with power and to understand better how international dynamics may contribute to the resolution or worsening of conflicts. National interests, such as maintaining access to oil-rich countries or supporting the return of refugees, play an important role and impact on the kind of peace that is built.

The role of the United States in the "new world order" which followed the end of the Cold War received particular attention. A participant observed that in his view, "multilateralism" is increasingly making way to blunt "unilateralism". The presence of one superpower has various implications that should be better studied.

Many participants were also concerned about the consequences of 9/11. Some expressed the view that the international framework has become more difficult for peacebuilding, while one participant observed that 9/11 may also offer an opportunity for peacebuilding researchers to get their ideas heard and to propose new approaches. Among the elements of concern, it was mentioned that since 9/11: national security is being favoured over human security; the agenda for peace has been pushed aside; and the world risks becoming more polarized once again. What kind of peace is now possible in a world that seems to be moving from prevention towards pre-emption, towards a more coercive approach of addressing instability and potential conflicts? What strategies should be developed in response to new realities? Obviously, further research is needed to probe these impressions, analyse their possible implications, and recommend informed responses.

The Impact of Globalization

The theme of globalization generated much discussion and was addressed more directly in the thematic working group entitled: “Globalization, conflict and peacebuilding”. Firstly, it was recognised that the concept of globalization presents its own definitional challenge and has various dimensions: economic (free market economies, trade, direct foreign investment), political (regional and global multilateral organisations), cultural (flow of people and ideas, mutual influences of cultures), and military (arms trade, international terrorism). Research should distinguish between the different facets of globalization and study their specific links to processes of armed conflict and peacebuilding. At the same time, the importance of using an interdisciplinary approach was stressed in order to understand better how these various dimensions are linked.

Some participants pointed out that underlying attitudes towards globalization (mainly economic globalization) range from condemnation, for being one of the root causes of conflict and poverty around the globe – accompanied by a call for resistance – to approval, for paving the way towards a world where conflicts are solved and economic benefits trickle down to the poorest members of society coinciding with a call for more rapid and far-reaching liberalization. Most participants tended to advocate more nuanced positions falling between these two extremes. Their positions are based on different analyses of what the effects of globalization are.

Some workshop participants highlighted the challenges of globalization. They observed that in a world dominated by the West, globalization appears to facilitate the export of western interests and the imposition of an economic development model which further reinforces them. From this viewpoint, peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities are seen as a means of achieving Western objectives. Whether intentional or not, some participants noted that there seems to be a perpetuation and increase of Northern dominance at the expense of the South. Concerns were expressed regarding the apparently reduced capacity of Southern governments and local populations to promote their interests and choose their own development model as there is a loss of local ownership and sovereignty. These concerns were seen as fuelling the anti-globalization discourse.

Other participants observed that export-led growth and adequate macroeconomic policies can generate new opportunities and greater economic growth. Mixed with proper redistributive and social policies, they could potentially lead to a reduction in social inequalities. In certain countries, one can also observe that the promotion of human rights and democratic values have led to the opening of political spaces for increased participation. One participant also emphasized that globalization (mainly through policies of liberalisation) is actually correlated with a decrease in violent conflicts and not the other way around; and that democracy is strongly correlated with peace.

These conflicting impressions regarding the potential consequences of globalization indicated for many participants that there is a strong need for further research. In particular, additional research is needed to evaluate how globalization (in all its forms) can help or hinder conflict and peacebuilding.

Root Causes and Long Term Development Challenges

As mentioned, various workshop participants argued that there has been a loss of ownership on the part of southern countries and local populations of their development and peacebuilding processes. It implies that, in certain circumstances, foreign interests are emphasised rather than local needs. This observation led to other questions such as: “Whose problems are on the agenda?; To which extent are root causes of conflicts being addressed?; Does a failure to address root causes adequately explain the recurrence of certain conflicts and the limited results accomplished by peacebuilding activities in these circumstances?” One participant cited the example of El Salvador, where peacebuilding efforts had not led to significant changes in the extreme economic and social inequalities that gave rise to the conflict. In the case of Palestine, another participant pointed out that the issue of occupation is at the centre of the Palestinian problem, yet it has been largely overlooked by foreign authorities in peacebuilding activities. It was therefore concluded that power relations can impose considerable limitations on peacebuilding activities and can divert the attention (intentionally or not) away from root causes. More research could shed light on root causes, and on how to make them a priority on peacebuilding agendas.

At the same time, many participants agreed that past experiences and research have already taught us a lot about the causes of conflicts. These lessons are already influencing policy-making in positive ways. In these cases, other questions arise: “Have peacebuilders been employing the right means to address root causes of conflicts?; Is the problem one of implementation?; How could potential obstacles be addressed?” Among the obstacles encountered, participants mentioned the lack of political will, limited economic resources, and limited time. Additional research could identify ways to deal with these issues and to find useful ways of resolving them. For example, in the cases of the Philippines and Guatemala, research on land reform could buttress indigenous peoples’ legitimate rights to preserve their ancestral lands, in the context of peacebuilding efforts.

Participants also emphasized the complex and changing character of many conflicts. Different factors, at various levels (local to international), interact under different conditions and define the characteristics of conflicts. However, over time, these circumstances may change. In the case of Colombia, among others, one participant observed that it is important to distinguish between the reasons that initially caused the conflict and the reasons why it still continues almost fifty years later. In these cases, research should re-evaluate the causes of conflict and propose new and updated approaches to resolving them. One participant also made the point that in the midst of change, there is some continuity. Conflict may therefore also have an enduring impact on societies that research could help better understand. In South Africa, for instance, a

participant mentioned that the same “marginalised” protagonists, who used to fight for political access, now find themselves fighting for access to economic wealth. Fundamental problems (in particular, economic and social) have not been resolved, and violence continues under the form of increased criminality. Research should therefore help peacebuilders address the complexity of conflicts and gain a deeper understanding on how they evolve over time, so that adequate responses could be developed at each stage.

Among other tools used to address conflicts, peace accords were given particular attention. One participant observed that they play a significant role in explaining the relative success or failure of different peace processes. Therefore, he argued that careful attention should be invested in their elaboration: the objectives and time-frame proposed should be realistic and constructive in the sense that they help the peace process move forward. While comparing the Guatemalan and El Salvadorian peace accords, it was noted that the more ambitious, and therefore, more difficult to implement peace accord of Guatemala, might in fact frustrate the peace process as peoples’ high expectations are not fulfilled. Yet other participants expressed the view that peace agreements should be comprehensive and should address the main concerns of the parties involved in the conflict. This was one of the conclusions reached while comparing the more successful peace process for Mozambique to the Bicesse Accords for Angola. After a peace accord is signed, other participants mentioned that it then needs to be properly implemented. In the case of the Oslo Agreement, one participant noted that an imbalance of power between the negotiating parties explains in part why, firstly, the concerns of the Palestinian people were not fully addressed in the accord, and then, why Israel gradually lost some incentive to implement its obligations. Research should therefore help determine the conditions needed to develop successful peace accords, and to identify the best means to monitor its implementation. Such findings could inform countries like Sri Lanka who are in the process of negotiating peace agreements of their own.

Then, many participants also mentioned that it would be greatly useful to research how development impacts on conflicts and peacebuilding. To what extent do poverty and inequality actually condition stability and peace? One participant highlighted the conclusion reached by the analysis of the peace processes in Central America: increased research is needed to identify the appropriate economic and social policies that could best address the root causes of violent conflicts. Others observed that the question of nation-building also needed to be looked at more carefully. Here, research could help identify which governmental, institutional, and judicial reforms could strengthen weak states, and therefore, help them better prevent conflicts. Various participants added that there is also a need for increased coherence and coordination between the different policies being implemented to support peace processes.

Finally, several participants from war-affected societies shared their deep preoccupation about the disillusionment that might flow from the inability to fulfil stakeholders’ expectations of peacebuilding processes. One participant noted that the biggest tragedy for the peace process in Colombia has been the loss of hope for peace and the loss of

popular mobilisation for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The same could be said about the Palestinian conflict. However, some participants were not fully pessimistic, a loss of faith in peace could be reversed and it would be interesting for research to explore means of doing so. Among other suggestions, one participant recommended separating short-term from long-term objectives. In other words, a short-term peacebuilding agenda could address the immediate needs of the parties involved in order to end the armed conflict, while a long-term diagnosis agenda for peace could then account for all the fundamental problems behind the conflict (including, in particular, social and economic needs). Some believed that this way, peacebuilders could limit the risk of creating unrealistic expectations that could later undermine the peace process. Additional research could therefore test this proposition. It could look at the short, medium, and long-term perspectives, identify means to adapt to the changing circumstances at each stage, and identify appropriate responses to each context. Overall, research could look both at how to end violent armed conflicts and at how to integrate peacebuilding into long-term national processes, the latter representing the key to building sustainable peace.

Multiple Actors

Over the past decade, there has been a proliferation of national and international actors involved in peacebuilding efforts. Participants agreed that more research was required on the relative strengths and weaknesses of different actors, and the difficulties of coordinating efforts among the many players in the field. Among others, additional research could help determine if the United Nations and certain regional organizations could play a greater coordinating role, and if so, how it could act more effectively to support peacebuilding activities.

At the international level, participants recognized that international actors could have both a positive and negative impact on conflicts. Some participants noted that the interference of third countries that are preoccupied in defending their own national interests could impede the implementation of any substantive resolution to conflict. Various participants added that international corporate interests also play a significant role, and therefore, deserve to be studied more closely. Other concerns included the level of commitment that is needed from the international community to generate positive results (or if insufficient, that could lead to unintended consequences), and whether it is sustainable in the long run. Other participants acknowledged that friendly countries have encouraged and supported peace processes; they have facilitated and mediated the negotiation of peace accords; they have monitored and provided resources for the implementation of these agreements, and; they have presented themselves as the guarantors of peace. Further research is therefore warranted to determine what roles the international community could play (or should not play) in different conflict contexts.

Secondly, various participants also highlighted regional responses to conflicts and the interest of investigating the role they could play in peacebuilding. In the case of Africa, it was observed that regionalism has gained momentum in the face of weakened or non-

existent state capacities. ECOWAS, for instance, has moved from being a pure economic integration organisation to one that also embraces a security agenda. Then, ECOMOG played a key role in the termination of violent conflict in Sierra Leone. Therefore, what role could regional organisations play in resolving conflicts, and under which conditions? Should regional responses be favoured over international interventions? What are the respective advantages and disadvantages to each type of response? Further research could help answer these questions, among others.

Thirdly, the role of donor agencies, the NGO community, and other practitioners was emphasized. Some participants argued that donor agencies are in great part responsible for the creation of a large number of NGOs (offering services of different quality) now working in peacebuilding. Many observed that there is a need for greater coordination and concentration between these numerous actors, along with other actors present at the international and local levels. They pointed out that donors also have considerable power and influence in setting the peacebuilding agenda. This observation led many to question the extent to which donor agendas determine which action will be taken rather than actual local needs, and therefore, to which extent their actions could be beneficial. In the case of Palestine, a participant commented: "Donors were interested in supporting a successful peace process. Thus, when the needs of the peace process were in conflict with needs of good governance, the donors placed more value on the former. To many Palestinians, the international community is guilty of consolidating authoritarianism (in Palestine)." In conclusion, various participants recommend the development of research on both policy and practice. Firstly, donors and NGOs' strategies for supporting peace processes should be reviewed in light of the lessons learned from past experiences. Secondly, researchers should also investigate potential solutions to operational problems such as: determining how to engage strategically with local actors, how to select personal and project partners, how to manage peacebuilding budgets efficiently and avoid dispersing resources. Research in these areas has already generated positive improvements in practice.

Finally, various participants commented on the importance of looking at the strengths and limitations of local actors. On the one hand, many pointed out that local actors play a crucial role in building peace in their societies. Local solutions and strategies are needed to resolve local problems. Most participants agreed that greater local ownership is desirable and should be achieved. These observations were linked to other critical questions like: "Whose peace is being built?; Who is really benefiting from peacebuilding activities?" According to most participants, peacebuilding should be an instrument of the people on the ground and not of the international community. Further research could therefore help better understand the role that civil society, social movements, and other local stakeholders such as women, indigenous peoples and the business community could play in supporting peace processes. How could their participation be increased and through which mechanisms?

Various participants added that peacebuilders have much to learn from local populations, from their perspectives on conflict and on how they believe it could be resolved. Their contribution could help identify alternative responses to conflict. In

particular, one participant noted that research could evaluate the pertinence of “autonomy and separation” as a potential answer to conflict and claims to self-determination. At the same time, another participant remarked that local knowledge is also limited and should not be romanticized. All should be held accountable for their actions. Overall, various participants recommended to favour reciprocal learning between both local and external actors. In this area, research on training and capacity-building strategies might be useful to determine how external actors could empower local actors so that they could become agents of their own peace. The interplay between domestic and external actors should also be analysed more thoroughly. Additional research could help find ways to build a positive balance between local and international actors’ actions. Various participants emphasized the importance of supporting both North-South and South-South dialogues so that all could exchange ideas and work together to enhance peacebuilding practices.

On the other hand, some participants pointed out that there are limits to what domestic actors can accomplish. They do not form a homogenous group and can have different, and sometimes opposing goals. In countries like Angola, Colombia, Myanmar and Sierra Leone, certain actors may want to perpetuate the armed conflict to profit from the extraction or production of commodities such as oil, diamonds and illegal narcotics. Citizens are also the ones who elect corrupt leaders and who support politicians that advocate a heinous ethnic discourse. Research is therefore warranted to better understand peoples’ relations and motives, the dynamics that take place on the ground and that can improve or worsen a conflict. According to many participants, it is very important to understand local dynamics, to evaluate how much we really know about local needs and to also study how conflicts impact on local populations. In particular, what are the implications of armed conflicts on gender relations and on indigenous peoples’ rights and rightful access to land? With regards to the later, a participant mentioned the experience of the Philippines where the national government broke all talks on the autonomy of Mindanao, and where the indigenous peoples found themselves caught in the middle of conflict, as they inhabit the territory subject to struggle.

Finally, some participants argued that politics have been overemphasized; that war is not a product of politics but rather of social characteristics, and therefore, more attention should be dedicated to the later. Further research on the sociological, psychological and anthropological aspects of conflict was therefore highly recommended. It could help peacebuilders better understand why people fight and why some decide to engage in armed conflicts. Is it always in the name of justice or are there other motives involved? Among other issues, one participant emphasized the need to study the social impact of marginalisation, how it could lead to violence and under which circumstances, and; to study the culture of violence, how it might explain the presence of both change and continuity in conflicts, in particular, as political violence transforms into criminal violence. What can sociological and anthropological research teach us about making justice, about building trust between conflicting parties and achieving some kind of reconciliation and sustainable peace? In this regard, some participants pointed out that additional research on Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) could be

beneficial. In particular, the critical study of the South African experience could contribute to a better understanding of the advantages and limits of TRCs, and could help identify the circumstances under which it could achieve constructive results. Such studies could better inform countries like Sri Lanka who also desire to foster reconciliation in their country.

Further Research

Participants concluded that attempting to identify means to improve the efficacy and legitimacy of the peacebuilding enterprise represents a noble and needed pursuit. How could one best assess the results of the past 10 years and benefit from the lessons learned? What kind of research would be most useful? These concerns were in great part addressed in the thematic working group on: "Comparative research on overarching insights from contemporary post-war experiences." Sector and case-specific studies were highlighted: various participants argued that they contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexity of conflicts. This approach acknowledges the fact that success and failure are relative to each case and that the same peacebuilding model cannot apply to all cases. Other participants emphasized the value of comparative studies. They pointed out that comparative research could help obtain a macro-level overall picture, and draw general lessons that could inform peacebuilders on best policies and practices, under determined circumstances. In the end, many participants concluded that both approaches complement each other and enable peacebuilding researchers to extract useful lessons while valuing the specifics of each context.

In addition, a few participants observed that there is also room for more creative research. For example, a participant suggested that there is a need for more cross-fertilization between practitioners and researchers. Ethical research and participatory research involving primary stakeholders were also mentioned. Some questioned how research should be used. Most participants argued that research should empower actors involved in peace processes, primarily local actors. As someone observed: "We need less research that creates papers and more research that creates power and capacity-building."

Secondly, methodological concerns were also addressed. Among other issues, one participant observed that careful attention should first be placed on the selection of an appropriate research method and of the cases to be studied. Should the selection of cases be based on regional relevance or on the presence of common features? Some noted that the study of structural (economic and social), political, institutional, and operational problems, among others, all merited to be undertaken. Then, other participants emphasized the need to identify the assessment criteria that will be used to measure the level of efficacy of peacebuilding activities: should minimalist, maximalist or intermediate criteria be used? Thirdly, some commented that dependent and independent variables should also be clearly specified. For instance, whether one is dealing with a state-to-state or internal conflicts, and whether a conflict is autonomous or dependent on international actors, are important variables that can influence the assessment of relative successes and failures of peacebuilding activities.

Finally, various participants acknowledged that one sometimes finds a gap between the information that is generated from research and practice. Crafting research agendas that will account for emerging opportunities to influence policy debates, directly by speaking to decision-makers or indirectly by informing the campaigns of social activists, remains a challenge. Moreover, research conclusions also need to be “user-friendly” for policy-makers and practitioners if they are to have any substantive influence. Participants observed that researchers should therefore think about how to apply the results of their investigations in peacebuilding activities. They need to find an interface between research and the capacity present on the ground. At the same time, resources could also be invested in nurturing the emerging epistemic community of practitioners and analysts in the field.

Conclusion

Concerns over what kind of peace is being built, by whom, and what kind of peace is now possible in the post 9/11 era first inspired IDRC to initiate this reflection exercise. One would have expected these issues to lead to many other critical questions. However, far from discrediting the peacebuilding field, many participants highlighted the importance of developing rigorous, evidence-based arguments to defend it. The needs on the ground are significant, positive accomplishments already demonstrate the usefulness of the field, yet there is much room for improvement. Most participants shared the view that future research could better inform the field and should always preserve a critical outlook.

Participants emphasized various challenges and elements that merit further research: the impact of realpolitik and globalization on conflicts, the kind of policies needed to address root causes of conflicts (in the short, medium and long-term), the motives and roles played by multiple actors in the field, and the sociological and anthropological aspects of conflict, among others. Future research will have to account for a wide range of levels where peacebuilding takes place (from international to local dynamics) and on how they feed on each other; for a wide range of actors (external to domestic), their relative power balances, and how they interplay to produce different outcomes; and for a wide range of policies (from disarmament to social policies for peace) and how their interaction may improve or worsen conflicts. Many participants also stressed the need for fresh research on progress towards, and enduring obstacles facing coordination and policy coherence for peacebuilding.

The kind of research that is needed to respond to the complexity of the field will also have to be multi-faceted. According to most participants, a combination of sector and case-specific research, comparative research, and participatory research that better complement each other, is recommended. Research should also build on the existing literature and on past lessons. Supporting North-South and South-South dialogues, and greater exchanges between researchers and practitioners could also facilitate cross-fertilization, and generate greater cooperation and coordination in the field. These are areas where IDRC, colleagues and interested partners could play a role so that together

we might also contribute to the vision of a firm and lasting peace in the contemporary era.

Marie-Thérèse Helal
18 December 2002

Agenda: What Kind of Peace Workshop

IDRC Headquarters
250 Albert Street in Ottawa, 14th floor
September 30- October 1, 2002

Monday, September 30

- 9:00 Plenary 1
Official welcome by Brent Herbert-Copley
Round of self-introductions
Substantive introduction by Pamela Scholey
Announcements & questions
- 10:30 Plenary 2
Chair: Gerd Schönwälder
An overview of the field by Michael Lund
Comments by Allen Sens, Enrique Gomáriz, and Eleanor O’Gorman
Discussion
- 1:30 Plenary 3
Chair: Stephen Baranyi
A southern perspective by Alejandro Bendaña
Comments by Jenny Pearce, Don Hubert, and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz
Discussion
- 3:15 Geographic working groups (simultaneously):
1. Africa, focussing on South Africa and Sierra Leone
Facilitator: Gerd Schönwälder
Opening comments by Graeme Simpson and Kayode Fayemi
 2. Asia, focussing on the Philippines and Sri Lanka
Facilitator: Stephen Baranyi
Opening comments by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz and Soosaipillai I. Keethaponcalan
 3. Latin America, focussing on Guatemala and Colombia
Facilitator: Colleen Duggan
Opening comments by Gabriel Aguilera, Enrique Gomáriz, and Angelika Rettberg
 4. The Middle East, focussing on Palestine and Lebanon
Facilitator: Iman Bibars
Opening comments by Khalil Shikaki and Sari Hanafi

Tuesday, October 1

9:00 Plenary 4: Reports from geographic working groups
Chair: Pamela Scholey
Discussion

11:00 Thematic working groups (simultaneously):

1. Comparative research on overarching insights from contemporary postwar experiences.
(IDRC Boardroom)
Facilitator: Stephen Baranyi

2. Globalization, conflict and peacebuilding (President's Dining Room)
Facilitator: Gerd Schönwälder

12:30 Lunch

Keynote Speaker: His Excellency Carlos dos Santos, introduced by IDRC Vice-President Rohinton Medhora

2:00 Plenary 5: Reports from thematic working groups
Chair: Stephen Baranyi
Discussion

3:30 Plenary 6
Chair: Pamela Scholey
Synthesis and next steps by Stephen Baranyi and Gerd Schönwälder
Closing comments by Pamela Scholey

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